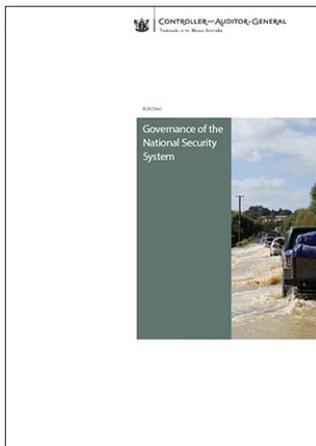




Summary of our report

Governance of the National Security System



National security arrangements are probably not matters that most New Zealanders think about often, but they are important to all of our lives. Although a level of secrecy is needed, the National Security System needs to strike the right balance between secrecy and transparency if we are to trust it

We carried out a performance audit to provide assurance to Parliament and the public about the effectiveness of governance arrangements for the National Security System.

We looked at the governance arrangements for responding to national security events, identifying and managing risks, and building national resilience. We used the eight elements of good governance published in our recent report, *Reflections from our audits: Governance and accountability*, to assess governance.

As part of our audit, we examined two examples of how the National Security System responded to recent threats. These were the threat to contaminate infant milk formula with 1080 poison (Operation Concord) and the response to terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015. We also observed the first day of an exercise (Exercise Tangaroa) simulating a national response to a tsunami.

In our view, the governance arrangements for responding to national security events and emergencies are well established, fundamentally sound, and fit for purpose. The response to Operation Concord was an example of the National Security System working well..

The “response” side of the National Security System

The right people come together under the “response” side of the National Security System and there are strong, trusting, and respectful relationships between them. The National Security Systems Directorate generally supports the response side of the System well and is providing better support over time.

A National Exercise Programme allows the main parties to practise responding and learn lessons. This contributes to ensuring that all-of-government responses to national security events and emergencies are governed effectively.

Vital statistics:

- 40 pages
- Presented to Parliament on 1 December 2016
- Download from www.oag.govt.nz
- Contact: reports@oag.govt.nz